

Message Text

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10

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

OMB-01 TRSE-00 /077 W

----- 064580

R 261310Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4822

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS CAIRO 6337

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EG, LY

SUBJECT: PRESS ACCUSES LARG IN CONNECTION WITH CAIRO FIRES

SUMMARY: SEVERAL SERIOUS FIRES IN CAIRO OVER PAST FIVE DAYS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY WIDESPREAD PRESS SPECULATION THAT ARSONIST IS RESPONSIBLE. AKHBAR'S EDITOR IN CHIEF JUNE 26, NOT SURPRISINGLY, ACCUSES QADHAAFI OF BEING BEHIND THESE ACTS OF SABOTAGE AND CONTINUES WITH LIST OF "DECEASED BROTHER'S" OTHER MISDEEDS. END SUMMARY.

1. SERIES OF SERIOUS FIRES HAVE OCCURRED IN CAIRO OVER PAST SEVERAL DAYS BEGINNING WITH CIRCUS AND BALLOON THEATER FIRES JUNE 21. OTHERS HAVE INCLUDED FIRES IN AHARAM NEWSPRINT WAREHOUSE JUNE 22, LUMBER YARD JUNE 24 AND AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AUTHORITY JUNE 25.

2. FIRES HAVE RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE EDITORIAL ATTENTION;
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REMARKS HAVE CONCENTRATED ON CALLS FOR THOROUGH INVESTIGATIONS

OF INCIDENTS, WITH OPEN SPECULATION THAT FIRES WERE RESULT OF ARSON. LOCAL PRESS JUNE 26 REPORTS THAT INVESTIGATIONS OF BALLOON THEATER/CIRCUS FIRES, COMPLETED JUNE 25, HAVE AFFIRMED THAT FIRES WERE INDEED PREMEDITATED. INVESTIGATORS HAVE REPORTEDLY QUESTIONED 90 PERSONS BUT HAVE NOT YET FOUND ARSON SUSPECT.

3. AKHBAR'S EDITOR IN CHIEF MUSA SABRI IN JUNE 26 COLUMN CARRIES ARSON THEME ONE STEP FURTHER BY ACCUSING QADHAAFI OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR CAIRO FIRES. ONLY THE RADIO STATION OF THE "DECEASED BROTHER" WAS JUBILANT OVER THE BALLOON THEATER FIRE, SAYS SABRI, JUST AS IT WAS OVER KING FAISAL'S DEATH. "DECEASED BROTHER", WHO BUYS MERCENARIES AND AGENTS TO CARRYOUT ACTS OF SABOTAGE AND ASSASSINATION, REJOICED OVER THE FIRE AS IF HE HAD STORMED BAR LEV LINE AND DEFEATED ISRAEL. IN CONTRAST TO QADHAAFI'S BEHAVIOR, HOWEVER, EGYPTIAN PRESS DID NOT PUBLISH STORY THAT LIBYAN PLANE HAD ACCIDENTLY FIRED A ROCKET AT TRIPOLI PORT DURING RECENT CELEBRATIONS, KILLING 20 PERSONS. EGYPTIANS DO NOT GLOAT OVER LOSSES OF THE LIBYAN PEOPLE.

4. AMONG QADHAAFI'S OTHER MISDEEDS, SABRI LISTS HIS HAVING BUILT A SUMPTUOUS VILLA EQUIPPED WITH LATEST FURNITURE AND ITALIAN NANNY, BROADCASTING FAKE TELEGRAMS FROM OTHER ARAB LEADERS CRITICIZING SADAT AND SMUGGLING 300 MILLION DINARS TO EUROPE WHICH HAS RESULTED IN LARG LIQUIDITY CRISIS. SABRI QUOTES PLO'S ABU IYAD AS SAYING THAT THE PERSONS WITH WHOM QADHAAFI HAS CHOSEN TO PLOT ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR SCANDALS AND ARE A DEFEATED MINORITY WHO FABRICATE STANDS TO CASE THEM IN FOR DOLLARS AND DINARS. IN THIS CONTEXT, SABRI REFERS TO NEWSWEEK ARTICLE ACCUSING GEORGE HABBASH OF ACCEPTING MILLIONS OF LIBYAN DINARS TO CARRY ACTS OF SABOTAGE AND ASSASSINATIONS IN EGYPT.

5. COMMENT: SABRI'S ACCUSATIONS THAT QADHAAFI'S AGENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CAIRO'S RECENT FIRES ARE FIRST THAT HAVE APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS; WE ASSUME THAT THIS IS NOT THE LAST TIME THESE CHARGES EILL APPEAR.
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